

Paul R. LePage

STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

July 7, 2016

Pastoral Center Rev. Francis Morin 24 Washington Street Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Rev. Morin,

Recently, a concerned citizen alerted me regarding a bulletin distributed by the St. Michael Parish. I would like to address the misinformation your parish has allowed to be circulated.

To my surprise, your parish voluntarily shared information from the group Mainers for Responsible Gun Ownership, which advocates for the passage of universal background checks. In November, voters will have an opportunity to make a choice on this issue and this group is clearly lobbying for a "Yes" vote from your parish. Why a church would allow lobbying propaganda to infiltrate your parish is beyond me. This group is careless with its own claim to facts and you may want to distribute the attached information from our office clarifying this misinformation shared with your congregants.

Because the church has chosen to take sides I feel it necessary to provide more clarity of the facts so voters may make an informed decision in November.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage

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Governor

cc:

Diocese of Portland





The Community Of
SEMichael Parish United by Christ's InveSeengthered by Word and Sucraments,
Serves God's people in a spirit of hope

Parch Mission Statement

July 3, 2016

Catholic Community 2 232-208

## Sacred Heart

14 Summer St..., Hallowell

## St. Augustine

75 Northern Ave., Augusta

## St. Denis

298'Grand Army Rd., Whitefield

## St. Francis Xavier

130 Route 133, Winthrop

## St. Jasoph

(10) School Street, Gerdiner

## St. Mary

41 Western Avenue, Augusta

## St. Michael School

207-623-3491

www.smsmaine.org

## Pasteral Center

24 Washington Street Augusto, ME 04330 207-623-8823, Fax: 523-7574

St.Michael@portenddiocesc.org www.stmichaelmaine.org

#### HOURS:

### Monday - Thursday 8am-4pm Friday 8am-1pm

Pastoral Council overlags are held on the lat Monday of every other month as \$100 p.m. at the Pestoral Conter-

### Diocese of Portland Website

www.pertlanddiocese.net

www.catholicscomehnine.org



Muder God

PRESENTE

(Winterp)



# Governor's Weekly Radio Address - Fact Check

Below is a point-by-point fact check.

LePage: "The proposal for Universal Background Checks on the November ballot seems simple, but it's not. First of all. according to Constitutions of the United States and Maine, it is likely unconstitutional."

WRONG. The United States Supreme Court, in an opinion written by the late Justice Antonin Scalia, ruled in 2007 that background checks are constitutional. (District of Columbia v. Heller, 2007)

LePage: "The media and liberal politicians use these horrific tragedies to demand the government take firearms away from law-abiding citizens."

wrong. This background check referendum does not take firearms away from law-abiding citizens. The initiative simply takes the existing criminal background check system - which blocks felons, domestic abusers and other dangerous people from purchasing guns through licensed dealers - and applies it to unlicensed sales.

These indiviouals are already prohibited from owning guns under the law, but because of a loophole in the law, they can easily and anonymously buy guns from strangers they meet online or through classified ads. This initiative closes that loophole so that the process for legally obtaining a firearm is the same whether you purchase your gun through a licensed dealer, over the internet or at a gun show.

LePage: "But it's really Bloomborg and other out-of-state liberals who are trying to buy this gun ban in Maine."

WRONG. More than 85,000 Maine citizens from every town and city in the state signed a petition to put this referendum on the ballot. The measure was co-sponsored by Judi and Wayne Richardson of South Portland, whose daughter Darien died six years ago as a result of gunshot wounds. It was also co-sponsored by Bucksport Police Chief Sean Geagan and three other Maine citizens, including a domestic violence advocate and a gun owner.

Mainers for Responsible Gun Ownership is a nonpartisan campaign sponsored and staffed by Maine people from all over the state and from all political persuasions. Requiring background checks for all gun sales is supported by a majority of Republicans, Democrats and Independents, as well as gun owners and non-gun owners.

LePage: "Making Mainers pay for background checks on private sales or transfers

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will make it more difficult and expensive to buy, sell and borrow firearms."

WRONG. This referendum does not require firearms dealers to charge anything for conducting background checks.

LePage: "Bloomberg's proposal would make it illegal to sell a firearm to a friend or loan a rifle to a neighbor to go hunting."

WRONG. The initiative does not prohibit the sale of firearms to friends, and it specifically allows hunters to loan firearms during hunting trips.

LePage: "Even some family members are not exempt from Bloomberg's proposal. A grand-uncle who lets you borrow his rifle for hunting is not exempt. Unmarried people who are living together may not be exempt. Even some members of blended families who are not related to each other are not exempt."

WRONG. Family members are specifically exempted from background check requirements under this referendum. Here is the exact language from the initiative that exempts family members:

"Family memoer" means husband, wife, domestic partner, parent by blood, parent by adoption, child by blood, child by adoption, sibling by blood, sibling by adoption, grandparent, grandchild, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, first cousin, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister or intimate partner.

LePage: "Furthermore, Bloomberg's proposal is not enforceable. Law enforcement officers have no way of knowing if someone complied with the law. The only way to enforce this kind of law is through a universal firearm registration system. And make no mistake—Bloomberg's proposal is the first step toward mandatory gun registration."

wrong: Since 1998, the background check system has worked to block more than 5.500 gun sales to felons, domestic abusers, those with severe mental illness and other dangerous people in Maine, and more than 2 million people nationwide. This law seeks to close a dangerous loophole that allows guns to be sold over the Internet or through the classifieds with no background check, no questions asked.

The initiative does not create a registry. In fact, the creation of a national registry is prohibited by federal law, and records of sales are destroyed within 24 hours. The Maine initiative does nothing to change the

existing criminal background check system, which has been working well for Maine's licensed gun dealers and their customers since 1998.

LePage: "This law would create criminals out of Mainers who have followed safe firearms practices for generations."

WRONG. This initiative simply makes it harder for dangerous people - such as criminals, domestic abusers and the severely mentally ill - to get their hands on guns. It does nothing to prevent lawabiding Mainers from selling or purchasing firearms, and it builds on Maine's hentage of responsible gun ownership. Responsible sellers want to know that they've sold a gun to another responsible buyer. This initiative is a common-sense policy that protects the rights of law-abiding Maine gun owners while doing more to make it harder for dangerous people to get guns.

LePage: "Strict gun control has not worked in Chicago or Bloomberg's hometown of New York City, Maine does not need ineffective gun laws that have not worked in those cities. More laws that deprive Mainers of their traditional use of firearms will not stop deranged people or terrorists from killing Americans."

WRONG. The statistics are clear: In states that require criminal background checks for all handgun sales:

- 48% fewer law enforcement officers are killed with handguns.
- 46% fewer women are shot to death by intimate partners.
- There are 48% fewer gun suicides, and
- There is 48% less gun trafficking.

And in Missouri, when the state repealed its background check requirements, gun crimes went up.

The governor's statements are inaccurate and misleading. The facts show that background checks help save lives, and that they are the most effective way to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. Polling shows that Mainers overwhelmingly support this proposal. The governor has unfortunately taken up the same misinformation strategy the national gun lobby has used over and over to try to stand in the way of common-sense measures to prevent gun violence.

By: Mainers for Responsible Gun Ownership

## Counter Point to Mainers for Responsible Gun Ownership's Newsletter

**First "Wrong" allegation**: The Supreme Court has generally upheld the constitutionality of background checks but has never had occasion to rule on a blanket, one-size-fits-all background check requirement that is encompassed by the proposed initiative.

**Second "Wrong" allegation**: This does not speak to the Governor's statement. He simply said that after tragedies in which guns happen to be used (unlike the Boston bombing where pressure cookers were used); liberal politicians call for Australia-type gun confiscation. Governor Cuomo: "confiscation could be an option. Mandatory sale to the state could be an option."

**Third "Wrong" allegation**: The anti-gun group responsible for getting the question on the ballot in Maine spent \$1.3 million on that enterprise. Michael Bloomberg's "Everytown" group donated 95% of that figure.

Fourth "Wrong" allegation: It is not in dispute that this initiative would require background checks for sales or transfers that now do not require background checks. Background checks are performed at federally licensed firearm dealers. Those dealers charge for the service of a background check because they are for profit businesses. Therefore, the necessary implication of the initiative passing is that there will be additional costs associated with selling or transferring firearms: the cost dealers will charge to perform the background check service.

Fifth "Wrong" allegation: The initiative would make it illegal to simply sell or transfer firearms to a friend without first having a background check performed on the friend. Further, the exception for hunting only applies if the transferee takes possession while in the act of hunting. Under the terms of the initiative, a friend cannot loan you a gun without first performing a background check unless the friend accompanies you during every minute of the hunt or unless the friend takes possession while in the act of hunting. Additionally under the initiative, one cannot simply loan a gun to use at a range without first going through the background check procedure. There is a limited exception for transfers at "established range[s]" that specifically authorize such transfers. Generally, either to meet the terms of the exception, the possession would have to commence at the range or the transferor would have to be in the presence of the transferee during every moment of the transferee's possession.

**Sixth "Wrong" allegation**: What the Governor said is absolutely correct. While there are limited exceptions for family members, a grand-uncle would not qualify as a "family member" per the terms of the initiative.

**Seventh "Wrong" allegation**: This initiative would be extremely difficult to enforce without a gun registry. How is law enforcement supposed to know whether an illegal transfer of a firearm has been effectuated if they don't know who owns the firearm? It is absolutely the case that this is the first step in the direction of creating a universal gun registry.

**Eighth "Wrong" allegation**: This initiative very clearly makes activity which has always been legal subject to criminal sanctions. It criminalizes behavior that has always been legal.

Ninth "Wrong" allegation: The murder rates in Chicago are a great shame of our country. To say that the gun ban in that city has worked would be to ignore the troubling statistics: the murder rate in Chicago is up 72% from 2015 to 2016; shootings are up 88%. To say that without strict gun control, the figure would be higher ignores the common sense argument that if law abiding citizens were allowed to possess guns, the crime rate would go down. For instance, in Maine, citizens enjoy both a low crime rate and a relatively high level of gun ownership. Maine has also recently done away with the requirement that law abiding citizens first obtain a permit before they are permitted to conceal weapons. It is time to realize that a way to reduce crime is to increase the ability of law abiding citizens to defend them by possessing firearms. See: More Guns, Less Crime by Dr. John Lott.